

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-14, 16-17 and 20-25 are pending in this application. For purposes of expedition, claim 15 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 1, 5, 12-14, 16-17, 20, 22, 23 and 25 have been amended in several particulars for purposes of clarity and consistency in order to place the application in condition for allowance.

Claims 5, 9, 12-16, 21, 24 and 25 have been conditionally allowed if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims 1, 17 and 22. The Examiner's indication of allowability of these claims is noted with appreciation. For purposes of expedition, base claims 1, 17 and 22 have been amended to incorporate limitations of allowed claim 15 in order to place the application in condition for allowance. Dependent claim 15 has, in turn, been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to avoid duplication. As a result, all claims 1, 4-14, 16-17 and 20-25 as pending are now in condition to be passed to issue.

Claims 1, 4, 6-8, 10, 11, 17, 20, 22 and 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Codama et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,307,317 as modified to incorporate selected feature from Miyaguchi et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,297,589 for reasons stated on pages 2-4 of the Office Action (Paper No. 20061023). For reasons discussed above, base claims 1, 17 and 22 have been amended to incorporate all limitations of the allowed claim 15 in order to render the rejection moot and to place the application in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments, arguments and remarks, all claims are deemed to be allowable and this application is believed to be in condition to be passed to issue. Should any questions remain unresolved, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' attorney at the Washington DC office at (202) 216-9505 ext. 232.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

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1/21/07

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